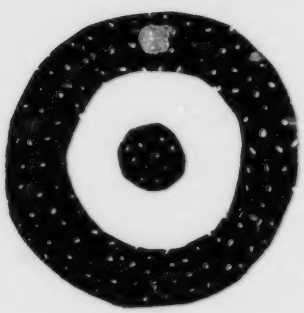
# Taking Aim

## Job Search Strategies for People with Disabilities



Ontario Ministry of Labour
Handicapped Employment Program

• *Taking Aim: Job Search Strategies for People with Disabilities* is available without charge to individual job-seekers in the province of Ontario.

• Requests from out of province should be accompanied by a money order or certified cheque, payable to Treasurer of Ontario, for $10.00 per copy.

Published by:
Handicapped Employment Program

Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7

© Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, 1986

ISBN 0-7729-0998-9

5M/1/87 rep.

# Acknowledgments

*Taking Aim. Job Search Strategies for People with Disabilities* reflects the input of many people. Representatives of consumer groups, agencies and employer organizations provided us with valuable comments and advice as the writing progressed. We wish to thank them for their interest, time and encouragement. We also wish to thank Public Good for providing writing and design services for this publication.

**Handicapped Employment Program**

**This handbook is also available in French and on audio cassette (in French and English).**

# Contents


**Using This Handbook** vii

1

**Starting Out in the Right Direction** 1

The Ideal Job 3

Technical Aids and Accommodations 9

Transportation 10

2

**Getting the Paperwork Done** 11

Resumes 13

Personal Reference List 23

Application Forms 24

3

**Finding the Right Opportunities** 29

Sources for Jobs 31

Salaries 38

Stepping-Stones to Employment 39

4

**Moving In on Your Target** 43

Researching an Organization 45

How to Apply for a Job 47

Discussing Your Disability 53

5

**Preparing for an Interview** 55

Interview Strategies 57

Typical Interview Questions 58

Making a Good Impression 61

Overcoming Barriers 63

6

**The Day of the Interview** 71

Pre-interview Checklist 73

Interview Do's and Don'ts 74

Ending on the Right Note 76

7

**After the Interview** 77

Interview Analysis 79

Follow-Up Letters 80

Follow-Up Calls 83

What If You Didn't Get the Job? 84

**Resources** 85

# Using This Handbook

Job-hunting is never easy. It requires you to meet with employers, sell them your qualifications and convince them that you, rather than any other applicant, are the right candidate for the position. That's a tall order – and there are often extra hurdles for people with disabilities.

Fortunately, job-hunting, like most endeavours, has a better chance for success if you use planning, preparation and strategy along the way. That's where this handbook comes in. If you know you are ready to enter the job market, and you are willing to work hard at an independent job hunt, this book will provide you with a practical, step-by-step guide to reaching your target.

Although it provides a lot of advice, this handbook can't give you hard and fast rules for every situation you may come across. Talk to people to find out what job-hunting methods they have found successful, or if you know any employers, find out what they look for in a job applicant. Experiment with different techniques and try to learn everything you can from your experiences during the job hunt: eventually you will develop a method and style that's effective for *you*.

Above all, don't let frustration or fear of failure hold you back. Job-hunting can take a lot of time and effort, but it is

one of the best ways to learn more about yourself and about how the world around you really works. Think of job-hunting as a challenge, approach it with energy and enthusiasm, and your journey is bound to be a success.

## Before You Begin

If you're anxious to work, you'll probably want to be involved with the job hunt full-time. Keeping up a steady pace will be easier if you use a calendar to schedule goals, tasks and appointments for each day or week. You may also want to set up a special work space for your job hunt with everything you need ready and at hand. When you *feel* organized and professional, it will be easier to convince employers that you have these qualities.

You will have to arrange some way of getting your resume typed. If you don't own a typewriter, try borrowing one or ask someone you know in an office whether you can come in and use a machine during lunch hours or on the weekend. You can also rent a typewriter or hire a typing service fairly inexpensively if you shop around. If at all possible, you should type cover letters as well, but they can be hand-written if you do it very neatly or ask a friend with good handwriting to do it for you. You should keep a copy of every letter you send out during a job hunt. If you don't have access to a photocopy machine, use carbon paper.

Finally, the challenge ahead of you will be a lot easier if you have a friend who is ready and willing to offer you advice and encouragement along the way. Ask someone you trust and know well to be your partner in the job hunt. This friend can proofread your correspondence, rehearse interview strategies with you and meet with you after interviews to discuss the experience.

When you've made these preparations, you're ready to take aim at getting a job.

# 1

# Starting Out in the Right Direction

# The Ideal Job

Some people charge into the job hunt without any idea of what they hope to find. They say to themselves, "I'll know the right job when I see it." Or, even worse, "It doesn't matter what kind of job I want. I'll take whatever I can get."

It's not surprising that these people wind up confused and exhausted. They're firing in the dark, and the possibility that they will hit the target—a satisfying job—is very remote.

A more logical and effective approach is to define the job that would be ideal for you, and use this definition as a guide to locate real jobs that are suited to your skills, abilities and interests. Then you can concentrate your time and effort on going after opportunities that offer the best chances for success.

Defining your ideal job requires you to analyze who you are and what you want to do—not for the rest of your life, but at least for the next few years. If those are difficult questions for you to answer, following these four steps can help:

1. Write a personal history.
2. Define your skills and abilities.
3. Identify your interests.
4. Evaluate working environments.

## Write a Personal History

All of us, no matter what we have done in our lives, have developed marketable skills and abilities and have interests that can be translated into career goals.

Don't believe it? Writing your own personal history can prove it!

A personal history is a kind of diary that describes, in as much detail as possible, who you are and what you have done. Your personal history, for example, could describe:

- major events and milestones in your life
- special challenges you have met
- difficult decisions you have made
- personal roles you have experienced (parent, friend, teacher, etc.)
- details about your education, including vocational training and recreational courses
- previous jobs, including both paid and voluntary work
- your leisure activities and interests

When you are developing your personal history, try to emphasize the things you've done that you feel good about. If your history includes mistakes or failures (after all, everyone has had *some* in the past!), try to describe what you learned from these experiences.

If you are putting your personal history down on paper, it may be easier to write in point form, leaving double spaces between the lines and wide margins so that you can go back and add any details you missed. You can also record your personal history on tape. Don't be afraid to take the time you need to produce a really thorough history—even a day or two. It not only will help you identify your ideal job but will be useful later on when you are writing your resume and preparing for interviews.

## Define Your Skills and Abilities

When you have completed your personal history, you will probably be surprised at how much you've actually done. The next exercise will use your history to define the skills and abilities that you will want to use in your ideal job.

First, go through your history and select the five roles, jobs, projects or hobbies that you found most enjoyable and satisfying. Then list the skills, duties, tasks and abilities that each of these achievements required. You may want to use the chart below:

| Achievements | Skills/Abilities |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Now, review the skills/abilities you have listed. Which ones have you used repeatedly in your achievements? How are the skills and abilities you have listed similar to each other?

Most people have a group of closely related skills/abilities that they enjoy using, and use well. Some typical groups are:

**Working Manually with Objects:** fixing, building, designing, maintaining, assembling, handling, drafting, operating, driving

**Working with Data and Details:** processing, analyzing, calculating, estimating, organizing, recording, classifying, typing, filing

**Working with Ideas:** observing, investigating, evaluating, solving, researching, writing, editing, designing, creating

**Working with People:** teaching, persuading, counselling, encouraging, caring, selling, assisting, demonstrating, speaking, supervising

Describe your own skills/abilities group in the space below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You may also want to ask yourself what skills/abilities you would like to add to this group in the future.

## Identify Your Interests

Often a person's skills and abilities can be put to work in a variety of different fields. Communication skills, for example, can be used to sell shoes or to work for social change. To identify the fields that you would like to work in, ask yourself the following questions:

- What really interests me in the world?
- What kind of articles and books do I like to read?
- What subjects have I enjoyed at school or pursued in my leisure time?
- What topics do I enjoy discussing with friends?

If answering these questions doesn't suggest a suitable field for you, decide which of the following sectors you would most like to work in:

**Communications and Creative Arts:** advertising, copywriting, graphic design, journalism, radio, television, etc.

**Service and Retailing:** customer service, marketing, promotion, product development, sales, etc.

**Science and Technology:** agriculture, computer science, engineering, industrial safety, etc.

**Industry and Trade:** construction, repairs, mechanics, maintenance, etc.

**Community Services and Education:** child care, counselling, fund-raising, law, public relations, recreation, social work, teaching, etc.

**Business and Finance:** accounting, banking, labour relations, investments, office support, personnel, marketing, etc.

**Health:** dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutrition, pharmacy, psychiatry, therapy, etc.

## Evaluate Working Environments

The final step in defining your ideal job is to try to decide what kind of working environment will be most likely to allow you to put your skills, abilities and interests to work effectively and enjoyably.

Place a check by the statements below that you agree with. Then underline the five statements that you feel most strongly about:

☐ I want to work for a successful, profitable organization.

☐ I want to work for a public, non-profit organization.

☐ I want fast-paced work in a high-pressure environment.

☐ I want steady, evenly paced work without much stress.

☐ I want a job with definite opportunities for advancement.

☐ I want lots of variety and surprise in my job.

☐ I want a position where my duties are carefully defined.

☐ I want a position that gives me respect and a good title.

☐ I want to work in an organization that is democratic.

☐ I want to work in an organization where there's one boss and a clear line of command.

- ☐ I want a place that allows me to make plenty of decisions.
- ☐ I want a position where I am closely supervised and supported.
- ☐ I want to work indoors.
- ☐ I don't want to be shut inside all day.
- ☐ I want a position in a small organization where I can learn how everything is done.
- ☐ I want the stability and benefits of a larger organization.
- ☐ I want a position where I'll work closely with other employees.
- ☐ I want a job where I won't be distracted by other people.
- ☐ I want a job in which I can get involved body and soul.
- ☐ I don't want to think about work after the end of the day.

## Writing Your Ideal Job Profile

Now you should be ready to describe your ideal job. Put together your skills cluster, your field of interest and your desired working conditions, and write an advertisement for the job that would be just perfect for you (a sample is provided).

**MY IDEAL JOB**

**A small retail firm requires someone who is energetic and ready to take on plenty of new challenges. The applicant must be able to work well with people, achieve good sales, work out new marketing strategies and develop displays and advertisements.**

**The firm has a stable, family-style working environment and could provide the applicant with enough experience to start a retail business of his/her own.**

# Technical Aids and Accommodations

You may have noticed that none of the exercises in this chapter have dealt with disabilities. That's because your career goals should be based on your *qualifications*—your unique combination of abilities, knowledge, experience and interests.

However, after you've written your ideal job profile, you may want to start thinking about technical aids and job accommodations that you may require. Here are some examples.

**Equipment and Devices:** for instance, braille writer; dictating equipment modified for people with limited strength; telephone loudspeaker for people with hearing impairments

**Support Services:** such as attendant care for personal assistance during working day; interpreters for people with hearing impairments; taping services for people with visual impairments

**Assistance Related to Performing the Job:** for instance, physical handling of files for persons with limited use of the hands; reading incoming mail for people with visual impairments; alternative forms of instruction for people with learning disabilities

**Job Task Adaptations:** rearranging or exchanging duties such as heavy lifting; exchanging telephone answering for photocopying

**Job Site Adaptations:** for instance, raising a desk; modifying a dictaphone; changing a door handle; widening a doorway; installing a ramp

**Modified Work Schedules:** such as time off for medical reasons, which could be compensated for by use of flexible hours or by letting the employee work on days that would normally be days off

Up-to-date information on technical aids and job accommodations is available from many organizations providing services for people with disabilities: a list of such organizations can be found in the Resources section at the end of this handbook.

# Transportation

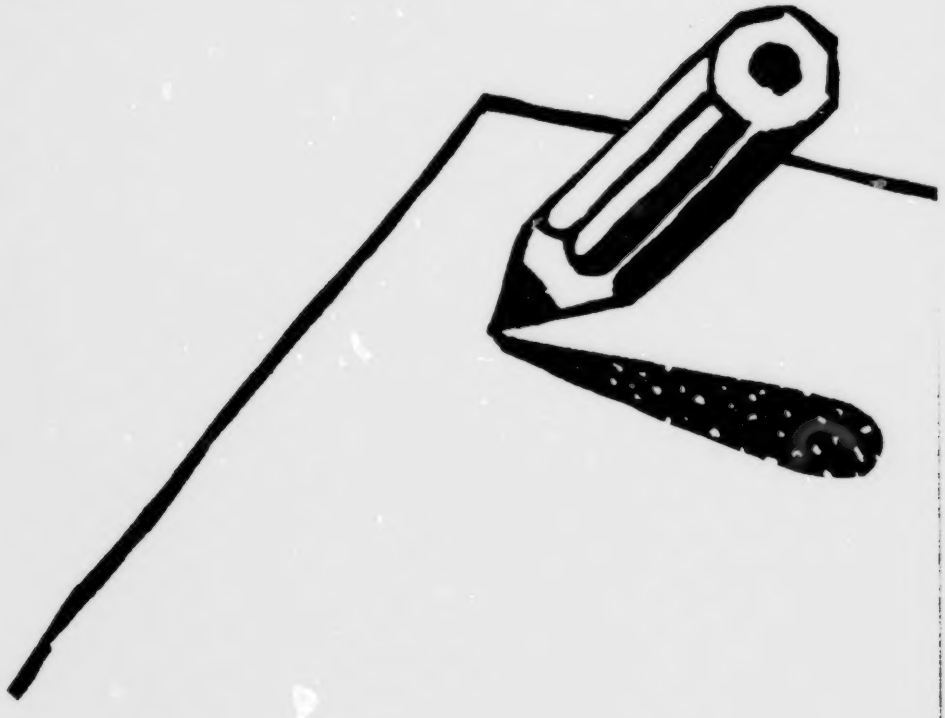
You may also find it useful to begin thinking about transportation: how you will get around to do your job-hunting, and how eventually you will get to and from work. If you can't drive or use public transportation you may want to contact your local transit system to see whether parallel transportation services are available in your community, and exactly how the system operates.

Unfortunately, parallel transportation systems often have limitations. For example, you may have to book the service a week in advance, even though job-hunting often requires you to go to apply for a job or to attend an interview on much shorter notice. You can, of course, explain your situation to employers; they may be able to suggest that you meet with them at a later date or at a more convenient location. You can also speak to the head of your transit system, explain that you are in the process of looking for a job, and ask if you can occasionally book on shorter notice.

If your community does not have a parallel system, or if an existing system is not meeting your needs, your job search could be limited to a specific area. However, it may be worth your while to discuss the problem with local politicians, community agencies or your local Community Information Centre, which is listed in the municipal government blue pages of the telephone directory. Someone may be able to find a usable alternative for you.

# 2

# Getting the Paperwork Done



# Resumes

A resume is a written description of your qualifications—your skills, experience, education and interests. It is used as a promotional tool to tell employers who you are and to convince them to give you an interview.

While it may not seem difficult to write a resume, it usually takes some effort and several drafts to produce a really effective one. An employer may only spend a few minutes to skim through your resume and decide whether you are a promising candidate. Your resume, therefore, must be clear, impressive and concise.

## What to Include in Your Resume

The first step in writing an effective resume is to review your ideal job description and decide what information from your personal history would convince an employer that you have the qualifications for this job.

Resumes traditionally include the following information:

1. Your name, address and telephone number.

2. A list of your previous full-time and part-time jobs, indicating:
- the company you worked for
- the dates of your employment
- the title of your position
- the tasks/duties your position required
- your achievements on the job

(The reason you left each job and the salary you received are usually *not* included.)

3. A description of your education and training, including:
- names and locations of schools attended
- certificates, diplomas and licences you have earned
- areas of specialization
- vocational training
- recreational and night courses

4. Personal information such as:
- community and volunteer work
- special interests/leisure activities
- associations you belong to
- awards and special recognition you have earned

**Remember:** the sole purpose of a resume is to sell your qualifications to an employer. It is usually inappropriate, therefore, to mention your disability in this document. You may also want to avoid giving any personal information that will identify your disability, religion or political views. For more information on discussing your disability, please see page 53.

## Organizing Your Resume

Your resume should be organized to emphasize the information that is most important for an employer to know about you and your qualifications.

For example, there are two common ways to organize information about previous jobs: **chronologically** and **functionally.**

The **chronological format** emphasizes your work *record.* It is recommended when:

- You've worked more or less continuously since completing your education.
- You stayed at each of your jobs for a reasonable amount of time.
- Your past jobs have shown steady advancement on a solid career path.
- You are applying for a job that seem to be a logical step on that path.

To use a chronological format, list your jobs starting with your most recent position and going back in time. Each listing should be headed with the dates of your employment, the company you worked for and your job title. A description of your duties and achievements in the position follows. A chronological format is shown on page 17.

The **functional format** emphasizes your work *experience*: it draws attention to your skills and abilities, rather than how and where you acquired them. A functional format is recommended when:

- You haven't had many jobs.
- There are gaps in your employment record or you are entering the workforce after a lengthy absence.
- You've had several jobs that lasted only a short time (generally, less than one year).
- Your past positions have been really varied or the jobs you want to apply for will be in a different field or sector.

To use a functional format, list all of your skills/abilities in order of their importance. Under each listing describe the positions in which you utilized these skills/abilities. Dates

of employment may or may not be given, but if they are not, a brief chronological work history is usually included at the end of the section. A functional format is shown on page 19.

Either the functional format or the chronological format is acceptable, but functional resumes seem to be gaining in popularity. A functional resume identifies more clearly what a candidate can *do*, and that, of course, is the crucial factor in properly matching a person to a job. Functional resumes also give people who haven't previously had much success in the job market a chance to prove that their qualifications are nevertheless valuable.

Usually resumes describe previous jobs, education/training and personal information, in that order—but not always. If you have impressive academic qualifications but little work experience, your educational history could be listed first. If you are an active member of several influential organizations, these affiliations could head your resume. If you have gained some of your most important experience through voluntary jobs, you could decide to include them in the work history section of your resume, indicating, if you wish, that these positions were unpaid.

Mary Rodriguez
13 Broom Street
Hamilton, Ontario
L3B 0N8
(416) 999-9999

RESUME

WORK EXPERIENCE

March 1982 -
September 1985

Senior Accounting Clerk
Canadian Catering Limited
2255 Mountain Road
Hamilton, Ontario
L5H 2B5

- Prepared daily shipping and receiving reports for machinery and equipment
- Prepared journal entries
- Keyed data into computer (IBM 34 System)
- Remitted monthly trial balances and customer statements
- Reconciled accounts receivable ledger and machine inventory ledgers with general ledger
- Final posting, closing and filing of all transactions within the accounting period

June 1979 -
January 1982

Accounting Clerk
Burlington Tool and Die
1552 Lakeshore Avenue
Burlington, Ontario
L1H 3C6

- Complete accounting and bookkeeping function to trial balance and month-end adjustments
- Daily preparation of bank deposits and cash-flow sheets
- Renewed service contracts and leases
- Reconciled monthly bank statement and prepared cash flow analysis

Sample Chronological Resume

| | |
|---|---|
| December 1977 - February 1979 | Bookkeeper<br>(part time)<br>Super Drug Store<br>4005 Main Street East<br>Hamilton, Ontario<br>L2B 5G6<br><br>- Responsible for posting to accounts receivable ledger, and monthly balancing of ledger<br>- Reconciled monthly bank statements<br>- Processed purchase orders for inventory<br>- Produced annual inventory report |
| EDUCATION | |
| 1976 - 1978 | Central Community College<br>Hamilton, Ontario<br><br>Graduated from 2-year bookkeeping/ accounting course |
| 1973 - 1976 | Northern Vocational School<br>Hamilton, Ontario<br><br>Received Grade 12 certificate from Secretarial/Clerical program |
| OTHER ACTIVITIES | Captain of Hamilton Professional Bowling Team<br><br>Organizer of annual Christmas Sale for Ontario Muscular Dystrophy Association |
| REFERENCES | Available upon request |

Sample Chronological Resume

Joseph Ortega
143 Richardson Drive
Sudbury, Ontario
P3B 3B5
(705) 999-9999

RESUME

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Organizational Skills

Ministry of Community and Social Services

- Researched and developed an index of publications produced by the Ministry, organized alphabetically and by subject
- Assisted in the organization of a province-wide conference of social workers by coordinating promotional mailings, preparing conference packages, and arranging for food and facilities

Epilepsy Association

- Organized direct mail campaigns and special fund-raising events
- Initiated a filing and retrieval system of newspaper and magazine articles
- Assisted in the cataloguing of the Association's library holdings

Writing/Editing Skills

Editor, Gemini Journal

- Researched and wrote editorials
- Assigned and edited articles
- Wrote yearly subscription brochure

Epilepsy Association

- Wrote and edited monthly newsletter
- Developed articles for submission to related journals
- Created promotional and public education materials

Sample Functional Resume

| | |
|---|---|
| Secretarial and Clerical Skills | Key Developments Limited<br><br>- Typed correspondence<br>- Routed telephone calls and inquiries<br>- Ordered office supplies<br>- Maintained filing system<br><br>Ministry of Community and Social Services<br><br>- Typed correspondence<br>- Maintained filing system<br>- Produced reports using Digital Word Processor |

WORK HISTORY

| | |
|---|---|
| May 1984 - September 1984 | Summer contract as Program Assistant for Ministry of Community and Social Services |
| November 1983 - March 1984 | Administrative Assistant at Key Developments Limited |
| June 1982 - November 1983 | Volunteer Coordinator for Epilepsy Association |

EDUCATION

| | |
|---|---|
| September 1979 - May 1983 | University of Toronto<br>Graduated with Bachelor of Arts Degree |
| May 1979 | Hilltop High School<br>Received Grade 13 Diploma |

| | |
|---|---|
| SPECIAL INTERESTS | Literature, current affairs, baseball |
| REFERENCES | Supplied upon request |

Sample Functional Resume

## Choosing the Right Words

A resume should describe your accomplishments as clearly and impressively as possible. In the list below you will find several dozen verbs that look particularly strong in a resume. Read over the list once or twice and try to use these and other similarly active verbs throughout your document:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| achieved | expanded | performed |
| adapted | expedited | planned |
| administered | facilitated | presented |
| analyzed | generated | produced |
| assessed | increased | proposed |
| authorized | influenced | provided |
| coordinated | implemented | recommended |
| communicated | initiated | reduced |
| completed | instituted | reorganized |
| conducted | instructed | researched |
| consolidated | interpreted | revised |
| controlled | invented | reviewed |
| created | improved | scheduled |
| defined | launched | set up |
| delivered | led | sold |
| demonstrated | maintained | solved |
| designed | managed | streamlined |
| developed | mediated | structured |
| directed | negotiated | supervised |
| edited | operated | taught |
| established | organized | trained |
| evaluated | oversaw | verified |
| executed | participated | wrote |

**Remember:** an employer's time is always limited. Make sure your resume is written so that it can be reviewed quickly and easily.

## Other Resume Tips

1. Try to limit your resume to one or two typed pages.

2. Include your name, address and phone number in a prominent place, such as the top right-hand or top left-hand corner of the first page.

3. Use headings, underlining and spacing to enable an employer to find information quickly.

4. Keep sentences brief, or use point form. Instead of this: "I was responsible for typing the correspondence for the whole department," use this: "Typed all correspondence for department."

5. Keep paragraphs short and avoid long introductory sentences such as "My position of Project Coordinator in this company involved quite a lot of duties such as..." Get to the heart of the matter—what you have done and can do—as quickly as possible.

6. Make sure your resume looks professional. None of your qualifications will impress an employer if your resume shows typing mistakes, misspelled words, uneven margins or grammatical errors.

7. Indicate on the resume that references will be supplied upon request.

## Resume Checklist

When you've developed a resume that you are satisfied with, ask a friend to critique it, using the checklist below. If it passes this test, get 15 to 25 good photocopies made, and keep the original on file in case you need additional copies later on in your job hunt.

☐ Has all important information been included in the resume?

☐ Does the resume look professional? Is it well typed and copied? Are any corrections that have been made invisible?

☐ Is it attractive and easy to read? Do key points and headings stand out?

☐ Is it concise? Have all unnecessary words or sentences been removed?

☐ Is all the information relevant and positive? Does every statement emphasize a skill or ability?

☐ Are personal interests and leisure activities described clearly and impressively? Do they emphasize achievements?

☐ Is the language precise and specific? Does every sentence and paragraph begin with an action verb? Are any terms too technical?

☐ Are you absolutely sure about the spelling of every word? About the grammar?

# Personal Reference List

Employers often rely on resumes and interviews to make a decision on the right candidate for the job. However, some employers will ask you to recommend several people they can contact to verify the information and impressions they have about you. Your list of references should be separate from your resume, but taken to interviews in case you are asked to provide them.

Your personal reference list should indicate three people who know you well and think highly of your abilities. Employers will be most impressed by references from past employers, teachers and respected members of the community (especially business people). Your list should provide the name, position, address and phone number of each reference. Never include relatives: employers naturally assume these references will be biased.

Always ask permission before you include people on your list to make sure they are prepared to provide answers to employers' questions. You may want to change your list occasionally to make it more suited to the positions and organizations you are applying to.

# Application Forms

It is likely that you will be asked to fill out numerous application forms during your job hunt. These forms often look quite complicated at first glance, but if you read through them you will find that they only ask some basic questions about you and your qualifications.

On page 26 you will find a sample application form: you may want to fill it out and take it with you to interviews to use as a guide when filling out real applications.

Here is some general advice.

1. Read every application form through completely before beginning to write.

2. Read the questions carefully, and be sure to give exactly the information that is requested.

3. Print very neatly and legibly. You may want to ask for two forms, and do one of them in rough.

4. Provide answers that emphasize your skills and abilities, just as you did in your resume.

5. Make sure the finished application doesn't have any spelling or grammatical errors.

6. Never write "Please see resume" as an answer to a question.

7. If you are asked your reason for leaving a previous job, it is advisable to give a "neutral" reason, such as "Career change," "Laid off," etc. If you were fired from your position, you can answer, "Will explain in interview."

8. The application may ask what date you would be available to begin work. You can give a date, or write "Immediately" or "At your convenience."

9. Attach your resume to the application form before you submit it.

There are some questions that the Ontario Human Rights Commission has identified as inappropriate for employers to ask in an application form or during an interview. Questions that are inappropriate include inquiries about health, handicaps, physical defects, illnesses, mental disorder, impairment or retardation, medical history, learning disability, injuries or Workers' Compensation claims, medication or membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is also inappropriate to require that applicants undergo pre-interview medical examinations. For further information please see the Resources section of this handbook, under Ontario Human Rights Commission and Canadian Human Rights Commission.

If you find inappropriate questions on an application form, you can write "Not applicable," or draw a line through the space provided. Do *not* leave any empty spaces in your form: an employer may assume you have been careless and have forgotten to answer a question.

Should your disability make it impossible for you to fill out an application form, there are three options. *First,* you could ask the person who gave you the form to write down your answers. *Second,* you could ask to take the application form home and return it the following day after you have had a friend help you with it. *Third,* you can ask to submit your resume without an application form.

# Application Form

Position being applied for | Date available to begin work

## Personal Data

Last name | Given name(s) | Social Insurance Number

Address | Street | Apt. Number | Home Telephone Number

City | Province | Postal Code | Business Telephone Number

Are you legally eligible to work in Canada? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you willing to relocate in Ontario? ☐ Yes ☐ No Preferred location_____

## Education

**Secondary School**

From | To

Dates attended

Highest grade or level completed

Type of certificate or diploma received

**Business, Trade or Technical School**

From | To

Dates attended

Name of course | Length of course

Licence, certificate or diploma awarded? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Community College**

From | To

Dates attended

Name of Program | Length of Program

Diploma received? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**University**

From | To

Dates attended

Length of course | Major subject

Degree awarded ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Pass ☐ Honours

Other courses, workshops, seminars | Licences, Certificates, Degrees

Describe any of your work-related skills, experience or training that relate to the position being applied for.

## Employment

Name and Address of present/last employer

From To

Present/Last job title | Period of employment | Present/Last salary

Name of Supervisor | Telephone | Type of Business

Reason for leaving

Duties/Responsibilities

Name and Address of previous employer

From To

Previous job title | Period of employment | Final salary

Name of Supervisor | Telephone | Type of Business

Reason for leaving

Duties/Responsibilities

Name and Address of previous employer

From To

Previous job title | Period of employment | Final salary

Name of Supervisor | Telephone | Type of Business

Reason for leaving

Duties/Responsibilities

For employment references, may we approach:

Your present/last employer? ☐ Yes ☐ No Your former employer(s)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Activities (civic, athletic, etc.)

Signature | Date

# 3

# Finding the Right Opportunities

# Sources for Jobs

It is estimated that at any time about 4 per cent of all positions in the job market are vacant and ready to be filled. So there are always job openings: the trick is to know how to find them.

The six most common sources for finding job openings are listed below. Ideally, you should try all of these sources: the more often you apply for jobs, the more likely it is that you will be successful in your efforts.

1. Advertisements in newspapers and other publications
2. Information from friends and personal contacts
3. Employment services
4. Direct contact with organizations
5. Municipal, provincial and federal governments
6. Unions and professional associations

## Job Advertisements

When looking through classified advertisements, use your ideal job description as a reference to help you locate positions that are matched to your skills, abilities, interests and desired working conditions.

If you are using newspaper advertisements, it's best to look through all the local papers every day: each issue may have a different selection of listings. Jobs are listed alphabetically but it may still take some hunting to find the ones you want: for example, a secretarial position could be listed under Administrative Assistant, Office Clerk, Person Friday, Secretary or Typist, depending on the title that has been given to the job.

You can also find job advertisements in trade and industrial publications. Ask your librarian to locate publications related to the field you want to work in, for example, journalism, manufacturing or theatre.

> **Note:** some advertisements mention "Equal Employment Opportunity" (EEO) or "Employment Equity" programs. This indicates that the organization placing the ad is committed to hiring qualified people from "disadvantaged" groups: for example, women, native persons, visible minorities and people with disabilities. These organizations could be particularly good prospects for your job hunt.

Using classified advertisements may seem like the easiest way to find job openings, but there are two problems with this method. First, employers placing ads may get hundreds of responses. So you should get morning editions of newspapers and respond to ads that interest you *immediately*—if possible by noon on the day they appear. Similarly, try to get copies of trade magazines as soon as they are published. The faster you respond, the greater your chances of being one of the lucky few to get an interview (more about setting up an interview in Chapter 4).

The second problem with using classified job advertisements is that about 75 per cent of all job openings, it is estimated, are never advertised. You will only hear about these jobs by using the other methods described below.

## Talking to People You Know

A surprising number of people find jobs through inside information from someone who works for the company, sells to the company, buys from the company or, best of all, knows the boss.

If you don't think you have any connections, try this: in the chart below, list the names of 10 people who could help you find a job. The list could include friends, relatives, neighbours, past teachers and employers, your vocational counsellor and so on. Contact each of these people, explain what kind of job you are looking for, and ask if she or he has heard of any openings or can recommend at least one other person for you to call. Don't be shy on your job hunt: people generally *like* to be helpful and offer advice.

Your list should keep growing with each contact. In fact, by using this method you can quickly build a network of dozens of people who are all helping you find work. If you're lucky, you'll hear about a good opening and be first in line for an interview.

| Contact | Phone Number | Comments/ Additional Contacts |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Employment Services

There are government-operated, not-for-profit and privately run services that can help you find jobs.

Canada Employment Centres, operated by Employment and Immigration Canada, have notice boards listing job openings, and counsellors who can arrange interviews for positions that interest you. There are also Counselling Coordinators (formerly called Special Needs Counsellors) who are trained to offer special advice to job-seekers with disabilities. In addition, Employment and Immigration funds several outreach projects intended to find jobs for people with disabilities. For more information on programs and outreach projects, see the Resources section of this handbook.

Many not-for-profit organizations provide employment services: you can locate these services by calling your local Community Information Centre (in the municipal government blue pages of your telephone directory) or by contacting some of the organizations and self-help groups that are listed in the Resources section of this handbook. Colleges and universities in your area may also have employment services that you can use.

Private employment services can be found by looking under "Employment Agencies" in the yellow pages. These agencies often specialize in a specific field, such as office work, light manufacturing or medical/dental, or in temporary or part-time employment. If you want to use a private service, find one that specializes in the kind of work you are looking for. Be sure to inquire about placement fees and how they are paid before accepting any assistance.

Whatever kind of employment service you use (and you can use more than one of them), try to establish a good rapport with your counsellor, and get in touch frequently. Make sure the counsellor understands your career goals, is enthusiastic

about your abilities and has a good attitude towards your disability. If you aren't happy with the counsellor's efforts, discuss the problem, and if things don't get straightened out, shop around for another counsellor or another service.

## Direct Contact with Organizations

Another option is simply to make a list of organizations that you would like to work for, then contact them to see whether they have any openings or can keep you in mind for future positions (turnover rates are high in some industries so you might not have long to wait).

To develop a target list look in the yellow pages, where organizations are listed according to the services or products they provide. A librarian can also provide you with business or product/service directories. You can find out whether the organizations on your target list have equal employment opportunity or employment equity programs by calling their personnel or public relations departments.

## Government Jobs

Governments are, of course, major employers: in many cases they are also committed to employment equity or affirmative action. If you want to find a job within the government, the following advice may be useful:

**Municipal Government**
Municipal governments vary in their hiring procedures and in their level of action on employment equity. Call the Personnel Department listed in the municipal government blue pages of your telephone directory to ask about equal opportunity or employment equity policy and about proper procedures for job applicants.

**Provincial Government**

The Ontario government is committed to equal opportunity employment and encourages applications from, among others, people with disabilities.

There are several ways to locate jobs within the Ontario government. The provincial government occasionally advertises job openings in newspapers and trade publications. The Civil Service Commission of Ontario also produces two publications that list job openings: *Topical* and *Job Mart*. You can pick up a copy of these publications at provincial government offices or at Canada Employment Centres; they are not mailed out to the public.

For information on how to apply for provincial jobs, advice on where jobs are available and perhaps assistance with your resume, contact the Employment of Handicapped Persons Program of the Civil Service Commission (see Resources section under Civil Service Commission). You may also wish to approach provincial ministries and provincial Crown corporations directly. Addresses and phone numbers for ministries and Crown corporations can be located in the *Government of Ontario Telephone Directory,* available from the Ministry of Government Services (see Resources section).

**Federal Government**

Clerical jobs with the federal government are posted at Canada Employment Centres. Professional, technical, administrative and scientific jobs are handled through the Public Service Commission, which keeps resumes and application forms on file. The Commission's offices are listed in the Resources section.

Most federal departments and Crown corporations have or are developing employment equity programs to increase opportunities for women, native persons, visible minorities and people with disabilities.

## Unions and Associations

The occupation you are interested in may have its own union or professional association. To locate an association, look in the yellow pages under "Associations," or get the *Directory of Associations in Canada* from your librarian. To locate a specific union, look under "Labour Organizations" in the yellow pages, ask your librarian for the *Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada,* or ask any local union for its help.

When you have identified an association or union that serves the occupation you are interested in, contact the public relations director. Explain that you are interested in, say, accounting, and ask if the director can recommend people and organizations for you to talk to about your career goals. Also ask whether the association or union publishes a newsletter that lists job openings.

## Helpful Hints

Throughout your job hunt, make it a habit to record the name, position and phone number of *every* person you speak to, and keep this information for future reference: you'll be surprised how often it comes in handy.

You'll find the best time to get hold of busy people is first thing in the morning. So put telephone calls at the top of your list of things to do each day. If you cannot use a telephone, ask someone to make calls for you, or use personal visits and letters to find out about job openings.

# Salaries

While exploring job possibilities, you should try to get a sense of the range of salaries being offered for the kind of work you want to do. You may have questions such as these:

- **What if I'm interested in a job but the salary seems too low?** If a job really sounds good, apply for it regardless of its salary. Then, after you've had an interview and know more about the organization and the job, you can make a clearer decision on whether the rate of pay really is a problem.

For example, you may find that the organization provides benefits that compensate for a lower salary. Also, some organizations offer low starting salaries but give generous increases on a yearly basis, or on the basis of proven work performance. You may also decide that the salary really isn't so important if the job provides you with a good entry into the job market and will enable you to move into a better-paying position later on.

- **What if I find a job opening but the salary isn't stated?** Some organizations decline to provide salary information for job openings. They may prefer to meet you and discuss your qualifications before indicating a salary range. They may also want to find out what *you* think is a reasonable salary for the job.

This last situation can be a bit tricky. Most employers do have a salary range in mind for a position, even if they will not reveal that information. If you are asked your salary requirements and quote a figure higher than this range, you may immediately be eliminated from the list of potential candidates. If you quote a salary that is far too low, the interviewer may assume that you haven't had much experience in the job market or that you don't really understand the responsibilities of the job.

The best strategy, therefore, may be to avoid stating your salary requirements. If a job listing or application asks you

to provide a salary requirement, you can respond with "Open," "Negotiable" or "Will discuss in interview." During an interview you might say something like this: "My salary requirements are flexible because I feel this job could be an excellent opportunity for me."

However, if you *must* state your requirements, give a figure that you have observed to be typical for other similar positions. Here is a good way to phrase it: "Based on my qualifications and the requirements of this job, my expected salary is $-----."

# Stepping-Stones to Employment

You may find that very few job openings match all the details in your ideal job. However, most people progress through several positions and roles in their lives. If you can't find your ideal job anywhere, look for a job that is close to it or will take you at least one step towards your goal.

You may also want to consider the following options as "stepping-stones" to full-time employment:

- temporary jobs
- part-time jobs/job-sharing
- volunteer work
- additional training

## Temporary Jobs

Temporary jobs can last several days or several months. Newspapers often have special sections for temporary, part-time and seasonal jobs. There are also employment services specializing in this kind of placement.

Temporary jobs can provide you with extra work experience, and it is quite common for temporary workers to be hired permanently by the organization they have been placed with. Temporary jobs do, however, require you to be flexible and comfortable dealing with new situations.

## Part-Time Employment/Job-Sharing

A part-time job could involve several hours a day or several days a week. The hourly rate of pay is generally lower for part-time jobs, and you may not receive the benefits that are given to full-time employees.

However, part-time work can be a good way to break into the job market: you may even find part-time work preferable to a full-time position if you do not have the stamina to work full-time, if your disability requires outside support care, if you are responsible for child care at home, or if you want time for extra training.

Job-sharing is a fairly new concept: it occurs when two people voluntarily share one full-time job. It may be difficult to persuade an employer to allow you to share a job, but you can certainly suggest it.

## Volunteer Work

Volunteer jobs can be found by contacting non-profit organizations in your community. If you are entering the workforce for the first time, volunteer work will provide you with job experience, references and perhaps an opportunity for paid employment within the organization. Should you decide to use volunteer work as a stepping-stone, try to get a position that matches your ideal job or at least has room for personal initiative and problem-solving: this kind of work will look most impressive on your resume.

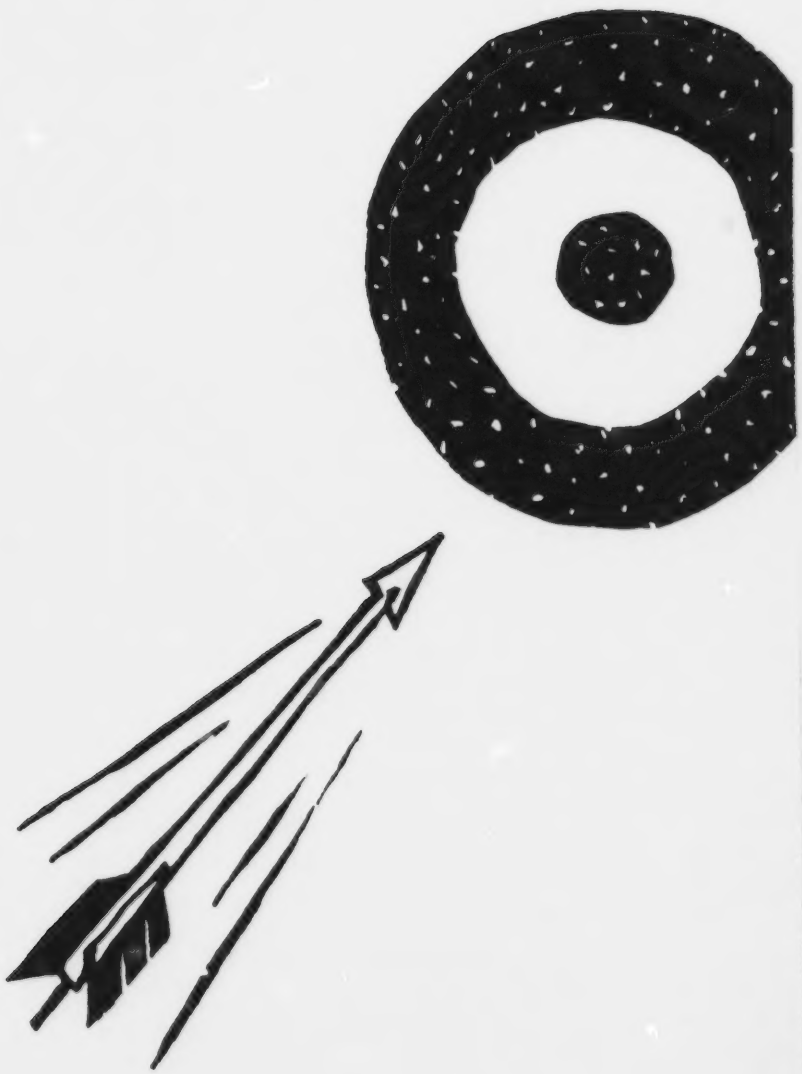
## Additional Training

In Chapter 2, you wrote a description of your skills and abilities. You may discover that the kinds of jobs you want will require you either to upgrade some of your skills or to learn new ones.

There are many ways to get additional training: for instance, adult night school and day school courses, correspondence courses, on-the-job training and apprenticeships. If you aren't sure which route to take, you may want to speak to a counsellor at your local high school or community college. Many of the organizations listed in the Resources section of this handbook can also help you choose a suitable program.

# 4

# Moving In on Your Target



# Researching an Organization

When you have located a job opening that you are interested in, the next step is to try to set up an interview or meeting with the employer.

Employers may grant interviews to only a handful of people out of the hundreds who have applied for a job. It is therefore crucial to develop techniques to ensure that when you apply for a job you will be one of the lucky few screened *into* an interview, instead of screened out.

Before applying for a job you should do as much research into the organization as time will allow. Ideally, you should be able to complete the questionnaire on page 46 for each position.

This kind of research is important because it will verify whether you want to pursue a particular job opening; it will also help you determine how to present yourself and your qualifications most effectively when applying for the position and participating in an interview.

## Job Questionnaire

---

Name of Organization
Address
Phone Number
Contact Person

---

What position is available?
What are the requirements for the position:

- Skills:
- Education:
- Experience:

Do I have all these requirements?
What else could I contribute to the job?

---

What does the organization do?
What are its products or services?
Who are the organization's clients?
Does the organization have an equal opportunity or employment equity program?

---

How should I apply for this position?

---

You must, of course, respond to a job advertisement very quickly, but you should still take time to analyze it, using this questionnaire. You may also want to place a call to the receptionist or public relations department of the organization to gather facts before applying.

If someone recommends a job opening to you, ask whom you should apply to, how you should apply, and as much about the organization as possible.

As we mentioned in the last chapter, you may want to contact an organization that interests you even if it hasn't advertised a job opening or been recommended to you. This is called a "cold contact."

If you are making a cold contact, it is absolutely essential to research the organization thoroughly and have a clear idea of what kind of position it might have for you.

To find information on a cold contact you can:

- Ask a librarian if there are files or magazine and newspaper articles on the organization.
- Phone the public relations department of the organization and ask questions, or request that literature be sent to you (annual reports, for example, are sometimes helpful).
- Call the Better Business Bureau, your local Chamber of Commerce or associations and unions that the organization may be involved with.

When making a cold contact you will also have to decide who within the organization is the best person to approach for a job. In a very small organization, you can apply to the owner or the general manager. In a larger workplace, apply to the manager or the director of the department you hope to work in.

# How to Apply for a Job

There are several ways to apply for a job. If the advertisement or the person who recommended the job to you doesn't indicate which method to use (or if you are making a cold contact), you will have to use your judgment to decide which of the following options is most suitable.

**Applying in Person**

If you apply to an organization in person, be sure to take with you a copy of your resume and the sample application form on page 26. You should be prepared upon arrival to have an informal interview, so read over Chapter 5, "Preparing for an Interview," before you go.

**Applying by Telephone**

When you telephone about a job opening you should immediately state your name, the position you are applying for and how you heard about the opening. Always ask for the name and position of the person you are speaking to, and record this information for future reference.

It's a good idea to prepare for your telephone call by reviewing the information you have about the organization and the position and making notes on any questions that you want to ask. You should also be prepared for a "telephone interview": the person who answers your call is likely to ask *you* questions as well.

A telephone interview could include any of the questions on page 59, so you may find it helpful to practise answering them on the phone with a friend. You should also have your resume, braille notes or other information available for easy reference during your call.

Try not to say anything during a telephone interview that could result in your being screened out prematurely. Difficult questions and issues should be discussed during an *interview*, when you can take time to express yourself carefully. If you are asked about your salary requirements or about a job you were fired from, or any other difficult questions, you can respond by saying, "I'd prefer to discuss that with you in person. When would be a good time for us to meet?"

If you are very nervous speaking on a telephone, you may want to have a friend listen in on the first few calls and then give you feedback on your performance. Talk slowly and clearly: you'll get better with practice.

If your disability prevents you from using a telephone, you can have a friend or counsellor make the call for you. Your assistant should explain that you *can* communicate well, but have difficulty using a telephone and will discuss during the interview how to work around that difficulty.

Here are some sample telephone conversations.

*"May I speak to Ms. Cohen, please?"*

"Shelly Cohen speaking."

*"Hello, Ms. Cohen. My name is Anne Cooper. Mark Singh, who works in your stock-room, told me that you need a new driver. I'm very interested in the job: may I come in this week and talk to you about it?"*

"I'm rather busy. Why don't you send in your resume?"

*"Could I deliver the resume in person and drop in to introduce myself?"*

"Okay. Do you know how to find the office?"

*"Yes. I'll come tomorrow morning."*

**Remember:** when you're applying for a job, your objective is to try to set up an interview, or at least a meeting, with the employer.

If you're placing a telephone call to a "cold contact," you could try this kind of approach:

*"May I speak to Mr. Pollock, please?"*

"Mr. Pollock speaking."

*"Hello, Mr. Pollock, my name is Tom Hardy. I've worked for the past three years in public relations for non-profit organizations. Now I'd like to get involved in corporate public relations. I was wondering if it might be possible for me to come by and discuss my career goals with you."*

"Well, Tom, perhaps your first step should be to contact our personnel department. They handle all our job applications."

*"Could you tell me who I should speak to in Personnel?"*

"Try Cora Macdonald. Her number is 999-6666."

*"Thanks, Mr. Pollock, I'll do that right away."*

If you are passed on to someone else in the organization, be sure to get the name of your new contact, and mention to that person that you've already spoken to someone inside the company: this reference could give your application some extra weight.

**Applying in Writing: Cover Letters**

Resumes sent in to an organization should always have a cover letter attached.

Cover letters are usually three to five paragraphs in length. An introductory paragraph explains why you are writing: that is, the title of the job you are applying for and how you heard about the job or who recommended it to you. The second and third paragraphs are used to explain your interest in the position and your qualifications for it. A final paragraph expresses your wish to meet with the employer.

Make sure your cover letters are addressed properly. Check with the organization to see that you have the correct spelling and form of address for the person you are sending the letter to (Dr., Mr., Miss, Mrs. or Ms.).

Some advertisements will not tell you the name of the organization that has the job opening. In these cases you should address the cover letter to the personnel department and use "Dear Sir/Madam" as a salutation.

A sample cover letter written in response to a job advertisement is presented on the opposite page. When you are sending a cover letter to a cold contact, be sure to emphasize what you know about the organization, its clients and its products or services. You may want to use the letter on page 52 as a guide.

September 3, 1986

Joseph Ortega
143 Richardson Drive
Sudbury, Ontario
P3B 3B5

Ms. J. Paquette
Manager
Dynamic Publishers
1442 Willow Drive
Sudbury, Ontario
P3A 2A8

Dear Ms. Paquette:

I wish to apply for the job of Administrative Assistant that was advertised in the Sudbury Star on September 3.

I feel my qualifications make me an ideal candidate for this position. As the attached resume indicates, I have strong organizational and office management skills and the initiative needed to put these skills to work effectively and creatively. My typing speed is 65 wpm and I am experienced in the use of electronic word processing.

I have also had an interest in publishing for many years. While in university I was the editor of the literary journal, Gemini. I assigned and edited articles and oversaw the publication's production and distribution. I am eager to learn more about the publishing industry.

My salary requirements are negotiable. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my qualifications for this position in more detail.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Ortega

Joseph Ortega

Sample Cover Letter

September 29, 1986

Veronica Lam
2345 Dixie Road
Apartment 1401
Mississauga, Ontario
L4T 2V6

Mr. F. Mazur
Director
Business Software Division
Computer Systems Inc.
33 Park Road
Kanata, Ontario
K5B 1C6

Dear Mr. Mazur:

I'm very interested in the possibility of employment as a programmer for Computer Systems Inc. I believe my qualifications would make me a valuable asset to your company.

As indicated in my resume, I recently completed a two-year computer programming course at Ontario College. I have also had three years of experience working as a claims clerk at Great Lakes Insurance. I feel this experience would be helpful since I understand your company is currently developing very sophisticated software for the insurance industry.

I would like to discuss with you personally my qualifications and my career goals. I will call you in a few days to arrange an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Veronica Lam

Veronica Lam

Sample Cover Letter

Of course, if you have indicated in your cover letter that you will call, be sure to do so! Your call could be something like this:

*"Hello, Mr. Mazur, it's Veronica Lam calling. I sent my resume to you last week, and I was wondering if it would be possible to set up a time for me to come in and meet with you."*

# Discussing Your Disability

Many people prefer to wait until an interview to discuss their disabilities with an employer. They argue that if you mention your disability in a telephone call or cover letter, you could be rejected immediately as a candidate, before having any real chance to explain your qualifications and address the concerns or misconceptions of the employer.

This opinion may be valid. On the other hand, there could be advantages to mentioning your disability when you are applying for some jobs. For example, if the organization you are applying to has an employment equity program you could have a better chance of getting an interview if the employer knows you have a disability.

It's really up to you to decide. If you do want to mention your disability in a telephone call or cover letter, you could do it in this way:

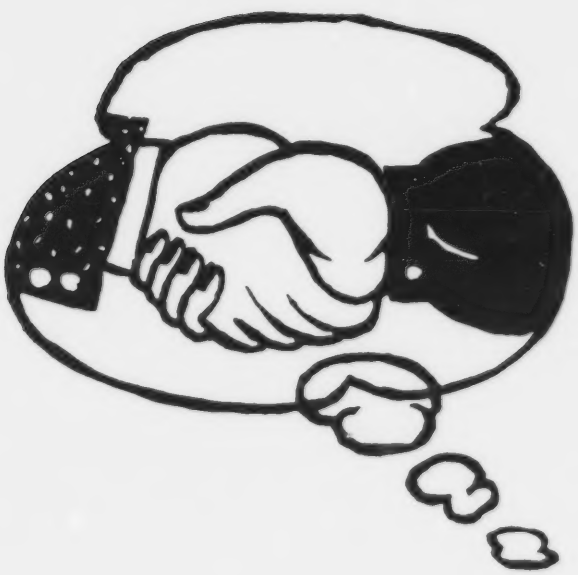
*"I understand your organization has a program [commitment or interest] to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. I would like to be considered under the program. I am confident that I can fulfil the requirements of the advertised position, and would be happy to meet with you and discuss my qualifications in further detail."*

Or you might say that your disability can easily be accommodated and that you would be prepared to discuss it at an interview.

If you do not want to discuss your disability before the interview, but need to know whether a building is accessible, you could call the company anonymously to ask, or visit the location beforehand or have a friend do so for you.

# 5

# Preparing for an Interview



# Interview Strategies

Many people feel that interviews are the most challenging part of the entire job hunt. But if you understand how interviews work, you can develop strategies to make them work to your advantage.

To understand interviews, try to put yourself in the shoes of the interviewer. What is he/she thinking? What does she/he want? If you could listen to the thoughts of an interviewer this is what you might hear:

*"It's three o'clock already and I've got four more interviews: I'll never be able to finish with them and still start on my report. Why is it so hard to find the right people to hire? Look at the mistake I made last time—the guy only stayed three months and he didn't even give me notice when he left. It cost a bundle to train him and the whole thing made my department look bad. This time I'm going to be more careful: I can't take any chances."*

The interview is just as crucial for an employer as it is for you. If an interview feels like an interrogation, it's because an employer can't afford to make an error in judgment: his/her time and money, and perhaps even reputation, are at stake.

Employers are searching for "ideal employees," just as you are looking for the ideal job. Ideal employees have all the qualifications required to do their work expertly; they are also hard-working, dependable, eager to learn, courteous, pleasant...you can guess the rest.

To find an ideal employee, interviewers meet with a few applicants who have already been screened and seem to have the right background and experience for the job. During the meeting, interviewers ask questions that may be general or specific, technical or personal. Interviewers listen closely to the answers they are given but they also observe each applicant's attitude and appearance. And interviewers rely heavily on intuition, the gut feelings they have about applicants during the interview.

With these things in mind, you can prepare for interviews in three ways:

1. Anticipate questions the interviewer will ask you, and learn how to answer them effectively and positively.

2. Develop ways of making a good personal impression during an interview.

3. Plan how you can effectively address the concerns or misconceptions the interviewer may have about your disability.

# Typical Interview Questions

If you've already gone to a few interviews you'll have noticed that interviewers often ask similar questions. So there's no reason why you can't prepare some of your answers before you go to the meeting.

Read through your personal history and resume. Review what you know about the job you will be interviewed for. What would be the best answer to these questions?

- Tell me about yourself.
- Tell me about your educational background.
- How did you choose your courses?
- Did you graduate? Why not?
- Tell me about your work experience.
- How did you get your previous jobs?
- What were your major responsibilities in these jobs?
- What do you feel you did particularly well in your jobs?
- What do you feel you did not do well in your jobs?
- Why did you leave each of your positions?
- How do you feel about your previous employers?
- Why do you want to work in this industry?
- How did you hear about this job opening?
- Why do you want to work for our organization?
- What do you know about the products/services this organization provides?
- Why do you think you are suited for this opening?
- Tell me about a time you have used your own initiative in a job or in a school activity.
- Can you give examples of occasions when you have worked with little supervision? With close supervision?
- What kind of things do you find stressful in a job? Tell me about a stressful situation that you have handled well.
- What kind of salary are you looking for? What is the minimum salary you would accept?
- Do you prefer working with people or with machines?
- How do you feel about overtime work?
- How do you feel about shift work?
- What are your plans for the future?

- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What would you say are your greatest strengths?
- What would you say are your biggest weaknesses?
- What questions do you have about this job?
- What questions do you have about our organization?

Practise answering these questions clearly and in a way that will emphasize your skills, abilities and achievements. Provide concrete examples to back up your statements and be very positive. You needn't apologize for anything in your background: you've learned something from *all* of your experiences.

It could be very helpful to practise these questions and answers out loud with a friend. Together you might think of other questions that could come up in an interview.

During an interview you could be asked a question that you feel is inappropriate according to the provincial and/or federal Human Rights Codes. If this happens, perhaps the best approach is to say, "I'm not sure how to answer that question. Can you explain how it is relevant to the position I am applying for?" The employer may take this hint gracefully and not press the point. Or she/he may be able to prove that the question *is* appropriate and relates to a genuine and reasonable qualification for the job.

The interview is the appropriate time to ascertain whether job candidates can perform the essential duties of the job. It is therefore advisable for employers to identify essential duties, and to ask questions at the employment interview to determine whether you are able to perform them. Questions about disability are permissible as long as they are related to your ability to perform the essential job requirements.

Medical inquiries or examinations used in the recruitment process should also be directly related to your ability to perform the essential duties of the job. Other relevant information may be obtained after hiring if it is necessary for personnel purposes.

# Making a Good Impression

New York University has made a list of the most frequently stated reasons for turning down job candidates. These reasons were compiled from reports produced by 153 businesses.

Amazingly, all the bad impressions this list describes can be avoided! When you've read the list over, think of how you can ensure that you won't make the same mistakes.

- poor personal appearance
- arrogance, aggressiveness, self-satisfaction, superiority complex, know-it-all attitude
- difficulty in expressing oneself clearly, a weak voice, poor diction and grammar
- complete lack of any career plans, projects or aims
- lack of interest and enthusiasm, passiveness and indifference
- lack of confidence and poise, nervousness
- no participation in activities
- interested only in money and in the best offer
- applicant refuses to start at the bottom of the ladder, or is too demanding and stubborn
- applicant makes all kinds of excuses for an unfavourable reference
- lack of tact
- lack of maturity
- lack of courtesy, bad manners
- applicant criticizes former employers

- lack of social insight
- dislike for study
- lack of vitality
- applicant does not look the interviewer straight in the eye
- a handshake without warmth
- high degree of indecision
- applicant neglects to answer all the questions on application form
- little or no sense of humour
- insufficient knowledge of his/her area of specialization
- lets parents make the decisions
- no interest in the organization or industry
- applicant stresses that she/he is well connected with someone in the organization, tries to "pull strings"
- too cynical
- candidate displays laziness
- an intolerant candidate with preconceived ideas
- limited interests
- no interest in community activities
- inability to take criticism
- no consideration for the value of experience
- radical ideas
- late for the interview without a good reason
- failure to ask questions about the job
- too aggressive and too insistent
- applicant answers questions evasively
- lack of personal initiative

# Overcoming Barriers

Sometimes an interviewer may make the following kinds of negative assumptions about job applicants with disabilities:

"I don't think this person will be able to meet all the requirements for the position."

"It could be hard for other people in the organization to get along with this applicant. Everyone will be uncomfortable."

"This person will probably have a lot of accidents and illnesses. We'd have to pay extra for sick leave benefits and insurance."

"My clients may not want to deal with someone who is disabled."

"It could take too long for this applicant to learn things. And he/she won't be as flexible as other employees."

"I'd never know what to expect with this applicant. I'd always worry that new problems may occur down the road."

"People with disabilities require a lot of expensive devices and constant assistance: we can't afford that kind of thing."

"This applicant probably feels bitter about her/his disability. Emotional problems could affect job performance."

"I'd have to give this person special treatment. Other employees will resent it, and the union might get on my back."

"What if this applicant doesn't work out? I could never criticize or fire someone who is disabled."

Often these judgments will not be expressed openly. An interviewer may be convinced that you can't do the job and feel that it's pointless to even discuss your disability and how it could be accommodated. Or the interviewer may want to ask questions but will not be sure how to do it tactfully and within the guidelines of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In either case, an interviewer's unwillingness to discuss work-related aspects of your disability could prevent you from being hired for the position. It may therefore be in your interest to start a discussion and provide information on your disability as it relates to your ability to do the essential duties of the job.

This recommendation is, in fact, supported by the results of an extensive research project conducted by Stanford University. The project compared interviews during which the job applicant mentioned and discussed his/her disability with the employer, and interviews during which the applicant's disability was not mentioned. Overwhelmingly, the applicant who discussed her/his disability was chosen for the job.

## Proving You Can Do the Job

Interviewers are usually very adept at determining whether you have the skills, aptitude, training, education and experience for the job in question. The difficulty they may have is determining whether you can meet the physical and environmental demands of the position. To prove that you can handle these aspects of the job, you must have a clear idea of what it will involve.

Before going to an interview, find out as much about the demands of the job as possible. You may find it helpful to look

at advertisements for similar jobs to get an idea of what might be expected. You can also refer to the *Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations* (available at most libraries), which provides a brief description of the requirements for typical positions.

Environmental demands may include the ability to work in extreme temperatures, high dust levels, poor lighting, humidity and so on. Physical demands can include:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| hearing | feeling | grasping |
| vision | sensing | handling |
| talking | stamina | fingering |
| reading | balancing | foot dexterity |
| lifting | standing | kneeling |
| carrying | walking | squatting |
| reaching | climbing | bending |

If you have a functional limitation in these or any other categories (for example, remembering, working with numbers or handling stress), you should go to the interview prepared to discuss technical aids and job accommodations that may be required to place you in the position and, if relevant, their estimated costs.

If the technical aid or job accommodation you need is expensive, you may wish to investigate incentive programs offered to employers for clients of Vocational Rehabilitation Services of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Several programs are also offered through local Canada Employment Centres. If your disability is related to a Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claim, you should also explore that avenue for financial incentives (see Resources section for further information).

However, the great majority of workers with disabilities do not require technical aids or job accommodations that cost a lot. If this is the case for you, make sure the employer is aware that placing you in the position would cost little or nothing.

## Physical Demands Analysis

You should also ask your interviewer to describe in detail the physical and environmental demands of the job so that you can discuss how you can handle them. A growing number of employers are able to provide a Physical Demands Analysis (PDA) for job openings. A PDA is simply a precise written description of the physical and environmental demands of a job. Here is an example.

**Library Technician**
Technicians are expected to shelve approximately 100 books each day. Books vary in size, shape and weight (2.5-3 kg max.). Books are carried out and put in their proper spots on the shelf (book trolleys are available). This involves reaching above and below shoulder height approximately 20 to 50 times a day. Often staff will use a footstool to reach higher shelves. The majority of the job is spent sitting (60 to 80 per cent). A certain amount of grip strength and hand function is required to grasp books, write and use the telephone. Verbal communication skills are helpful. Sight is necessary and hearing skills are an asset.

## Useful Strategies

You must use your own judgment, instinct and past experiences to decide when and how to discuss your disability during an interview. Contact the provincial and federal Human Rights Commissions if you have any concerns about the types of questions that are appropriate at employment interviews. You may also find the following suggestions helpful:

- Appear comfortable and confident when discussing your disability: this will help to put your interviewer at ease, and enable him/her to view your disability in its proper perspective.

- Remember that an interviewer may not have had any experience with your type of disability, and may know nothing about it. Try to anticipate the concerns—both "practical" and "emotional"—that the interviewer may have.

- Look for natural opportunities to get into the discussion: for example, if your interviewer says, "Tell me something about yourself," that could be your cue. You could also simply say, "You may be wondering whether my disability will affect my ability to do this job," and go on from there.

- Although it may be in contravention of the Ontario Human Rights Code for employers to ask you about non-work-related aspects of your disability, you may want to volunteer a simple explanation of your condition. Remember: it's what interviewers *don't* know—and fear of the unknown—that makes them so concerned.

- Give examples of how you have creatively and effectively met challenges that have resulted from your disability, especially in past working experiences.

- You may feel your disability has taught you to be more flexible and more adept at problem-solving than people without disabilities. Don't forget to mention these qualities: they are a real asset to any employer.

- Point out that your disability hasn't limited your personal achievements and work performance. Give examples of your independence and initiative.

- Appear eager and enthusiastic about the position you are applying for, but not desperate to get any job. After all, you will be a valued worker in the organization—you're not asking for charity.

- If you are using an hearing interpreter for the interview, make it clear to the interviewer that your assistant is there to facilitate communication, and is *not* answering the questions for you.

- Emphasize your understanding of punctuality, reliability and good work habits. If much of your work experience

has been as a volunteer, stress that these were "real" jobs, requiring a high degree of skill and professionalism.

- Use the interview itself as an opportunity to convince interviewers that you have good interpersonal skills and will be able to maintain good relationships with co-workers.

- Never lose your cool! Whatever an interviewer may say, don't respond defensively, angrily or impatiently. Remember that ignorance, not malice, is usually behind any thoughtless or condescending remarks.

- If the interviewer starts asking questions that are too personal or inappropriate, gently bring the discussion back to the job and your ability to do it. If this is impossible, ask the interviewer to clarify how these questions relate to the job. If the interviewer doesn't have a good reason for the questions, politely but firmly decline to answer. It's not unusual for interviewers to "test" applicants, to make sure they can handle stress with composure.

- Should the interviewer remain doubtful that you can perform the job, explain in detail how you would handle certain situations, or ask whether you can actually demonstrate your ability to do certain tasks.

- You may find it useful to mention that studies have *proven* disabled workers are a good investment. Here is a summary of one such study:

---

Du Pont, a major North American employer, made the following report after a 1981 study involving 2,745 employees with disabilities:

*Insurance*: No increase in compensation or cost.

*Adjustment to the Workplace*: Minimal: included some simple changes such as lowered work surfaces, special desks, an entrance ramp, etc. Most employees required no special work arrangements at all.

*Safety*: 96 per cent of employees with disabilities had average or better safety records, compared with 92 per cent of non-impaired employees.

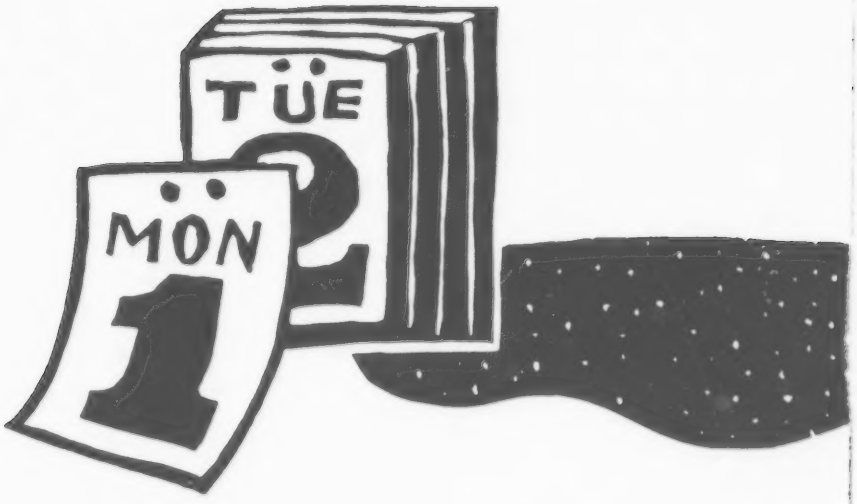
*Job Performance*: 92 per cent of the employees with disabilities were rated average or better, compared with 91 per cent of non-impaired employees.

*Attendance*: 85 per cent were rated average or better, compared with 91 per cent of non-impaired employees.

In addition, an earlier study by Du Pont (1973) covering 1,452 employees with disabilities showed that there was no increase in insurance costs, that no special privileges were required, and that job stability was average or better.

# 6

# The Day of the Interview



# Pre-interview Checklist

Congratulations! If you're going to an interview, you've impressed the employer – either by your phone calls or by your letter and resume. Remember, not everyone gets this far in the job hunt: the organization obviously considers you a very promising candidate.

If you've followed this handbook carefully, the interview should go smoothly. This chapter only provides some last-minute advice.

Before going to an interview, you may want to run through this brief checklist.

☐ Do I have the address, department and room number of the interview?

---

☐ Do I have the name of the person I am to report to for the interview, and the names of anyone else I have spoken to about the job?

---

Do I have the following items with me?

☐ two copies of my resume

☐ a copy of my personal reference list

☐ a copy of any correspondence I sent to the employer

☐ my sample application form, or any information I may need to complete an application form

☐ a pen and notebook, braille note-taker or other aids for taking down important information

> **Note:** it's usually best to make notes as soon as you can after leaving the interview.

---

Have I reviewed the following information?

☐ My resume and personal history (all facts memorized)

☐ The requirements of the job I am applying for

☐ Facts about the organizaton

---

Are my interview strategies clear?

☐ How will I answer questions?

☐ What questions will I ask about the job and the organization?

☐ How am I planning to make a good personal impression?

☐ How will I address concerns the interviewer may have about my disability?

# Interview Do's and Don'ts

**Do** be prepared to offer a pleasant greeting and warm handshake when you meet the interviewer.

**Do** mention briefly the good things you've heard about the organization and its products or services.

**Do** try to look relaxed, alert and interested.

**Do** listen carefully to your interviewer, and ask for clarification of any questions or information that you missed or don't understand.

**Do** explain to the interviewer how to communicate better with you if you have a hearing impairment.

**Do** watch your interviewer closely. If she/he seems puzzled, explain yourself more clearly. If he/she seems bored, you may be talking too much.

**Do** take the time you need to answer questions thoroughly. If a question has caught you by surprise say, "That's a good question. Let me think about it for a minute."

**Do** try to keep the conversation related to the job and to why you feel you can do it.

**Do** volunteer information if the interviewer has neglected to ask about something that you feel is important to discuss.

**Do** try to be honest and sincere, but don't use the interview as a confessional.

**Don't** use the first name of the interviewer.

**Don't** smoke or chew gum.

**Don't** answer questions by saying, "Oh, that's all explained in my resume."

**Don't** talk about why you need the job: employers are interested in what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.

**Don't** try to bluff. Interviewers are usually experienced enough to spot insincerity.

**Don't** criticize any of your past employers. You'll gain points by appearing mature, understanding and loyal to the people you've worked with.

**Don't** apologize for any lack of experience or education.

# Ending on the Right Note

Always let the interviewer make the first move to end a meeting. When she/he indicates that the interview has come to an end, you should:

1. Ask the interviewer if he/she has any further questions or any concerns regarding your qualifications for the job.

2. Ask when a decision on the position is likely to be made.

3. Ask permission to contact the employer after that date.

4. Reiterate your interest in the position, and thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.

# 7

# After the Interview

# Interview Analysis

After an interview you may be tempted to sit back and wait for the phone call that will bring good news or bad. However, following up on an interview is just as important as preparing for one.

Immediately after an interview, you should take some time to analyze it while it is still fresh in your mind.

1. What questions did the interviewer ask that I was not prepared for?

2. What questions did I forget to ask about the position and the company?

3. What is one reason that I might not get hired for the job?

4. What was the strongest part of my presentation?

5. Did I describe my accomplishments clearly and confidently? If not, where and why were there difficulties?

6. Was the interviewer convinced that my disability is irrelevant or could be accommodated in the position?

7. What impression did the interviewer have of me at the end of our meeting? Is this the impression I wanted to give?

8. How could I have improved the interview?

The answers to these questions should be written down and kept on file: they can help you improve your performance in the future.

# Follow-Up Letters

Always send a follow-up letter to your interviewer; the employer may take several days to make a decision, and your letter will ensure that you are remembered as a good candidate with a real interest in the position. If possible, have your follow-up letter in the mail the day after your interview. The letter should repeat your interest in the job, your enthusiasm about the organization and your intention to accept the position if it is offered. You may also use the letter to re-emphasize your qualifications, but keep it brief. A sample follow-up letter is presented on the opposite page.

If someone recommended a job to you, you may also consider sending that person a note such as the one on page 82, unless it is a friend that you would like to thank in person. This is a good way to keep contacts that may come in useful at another time.

March 14, 1986

Rosa Mirando
65 Eastview Avenue
Apartment 1213
Scarborough, Ontario
M1L 2P3

Ms. Roberta Taylor
Manager
Laboratory Services
General Hospital
111 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2P3

Dear Ms. Taylor:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on March 10. The position of Lab Technician we discussed appears to match my qualifications completely. I was very impressed by the staff and facilities at General Hospital and would welcome the opportunity to work in such a committed and innovative institution.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require additional information or references: I will be pleased to send any materials upon your request. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rosa Mirando

Rosa Mirando

Sample Follow-Up Letter

March 15, 1986

Rosa Mirando
65 Eastview Avenue
Apartment 1213
Scarborough, Ontario
M1L 2P3

Mr. Jeffrey O'Toole
Personnel Manager
Eastern Laboratory Services
7848 Danforth Avenue
Scarborough, Ontario
M1P 2N5

Dear Mr. O'Toole:

Thank you for suggesting I call Ms. Taylor at General Hospital about a job as a lab technician. I met with Ms. Taylor last week and the position she described is exactly what I am looking for. I'm also very enthusiastic about the people at General Hospital and feel that I can make a real contribution to the team.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

Rosa Mirando

Rosa Mirando

Sample Follow-Up Letter

# Follow-Up Calls

During the interview you should have asked when a decision about the job was likely to be made. If this date has passed and you haven't heard from the company, you may wish to make a follow-up telephone call. Your call should be brief and polite:

*"Hello, Ms. Taylor. This is Rosa Mirando: you interviewed me last week for a job as a lab technician. I'm calling to inquire whether you have reached a decision on that position."*

There are three answers that you can get to this question:

- No, we haven't made a decision.
- Yes, we made a decision, and you have the job.
- Yes, we made a decision, but you were not the candidate chosen for the position.

If the employer hasn't reached a decision, you could ask how much longer the process is expected to take. You might, for example, ask if it will be all right for you to call again in a week. Be extremely tactful, and if you sense impatience, end your call quickly.

If you have been chosen for the job, good work! But before you formally accept the offer make sure that you have verified the following details:

- starting date
- title of the position
- salary/hourly rate
- overtime pay
- hours of work
- benefits

# What If You Didn't Get the Job?

Missing out on a job isn't the end of the world. Ask around: most people have had to go through dozens of interviews in their careers. So put your experiences to good use. With each interview, you should get more confident and better equipped to sell yourself and your accomplishments to an employer.

If you didn't get a position, why not ask the interviewer about other openings? Or ask for recommendations of other organizations that might be able to use your abilities. You can also inquire whether the interviewer can spend a few minutes discussing what she/he felt were the strong points and weak points in your interview performance. Not only will this help you prepare for future interviews, but an interviewer may be so impressed by your enthusiasm and maturity that he/she will try to locate another job opening for you.

If you've tried for a lot of jobs without success, you may want to go back and do some of the exercises in this handbook again. Should you redefine your ideal job? Should you reconsider some of the stepping-stones in Chapter 3? Does your resume need improving? Have you explored thoroughly all the possible job sources that were discussed? How about looking into some of the services listed in the Resources section?

Remember, finding a job takes hard work and time—perhaps even several months. No one can deny that today's job market is tough, and that people with disabilities have extra challenges to face. But every telephone call, every interview takes you one step closer to that lucky break. So keep trying—you *can* get a job!

# Resources

# Resources

This section lists some of the government agencies, not-for-profit organizations and self-help groups that can provide additional information or assistance for your job hunt.

Many of the resources listed here are specifically for persons with disabilities. However, you are encouraged to find out about the full range of services available in your community and to use them as well.

While you are exploring these resources you may find it useful to compile a more concise, personal directory of telephone and TDD numbers that you will use frequently during your search. You can use the chart on page 106 for this purpose.

## Provincial Government

### Finding Information on Provincial Programs and Services

The quickest way to find information on Ontario government programs and services is to consult the government blue pages of your telephone directory.

If you can't find the information you need in the blue pages, the Citizen's Inquiry Bureau operates a free, province-wide general inquiry service that can be reached by calling the numbers listed below. The Bureau will answer your questions, transfer you to the right office or provide you with a toll-free number to reach the office you need.

Toronto: (416) 965-3535 (voice only)

Toronto: (416) 965-5130 (TDD only)

London: (519) 679-7000

Ottawa: (613) 566-2721

Sudbury: (705) 675-4574

Thunder Bay: (807) 475-1110

From all other parts of Ontario, dial zero and ask for Zenith Ontario. For TDD inquiries toll-free, dial 1-800-268-7065.

In northern communities the Ontario Ministry of Northern Affairs represents all Ontario government ministries wherever they do not have offices themselves. If you live in the north, contact the nearest Ministry of Northern Affairs office for information and assistance on all provincial government programs.

**Civil Service Commission of Ontario**
Employment of Handicapped Persons Program
Frost Building South
Room 164
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Z5
(416) 965-6081
Please consult Bell Canada for TDD number.

The government of Ontario is committed to equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities. This program provides special recruitment and referral services to assist applicants in gaining both permanent and temporary employment in the government. Applicants are also encouraged to approach ministries directly.

**Employment Standards Branch**
Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7
(416) 965-5251

Other offices are located across Ontario; see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Employment Standards Branch is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Employment Standards Act and its regulations. The Act provides for minimum terms and conditions of employment and regulates hours of work, minimum wages, overtime pay, public holidays, vacation pay, pregnancy leave, equal pay for equal work and notice of termination of employment.

If you feel that any of your rights as an employee under the Act have been violated, the Branch can investigate your complaint. The Employment Standards Act prohibits employers from dismissing, disciplining, intimidating, coercing or using any other form of punishment against any employee who seeks to enforce the provisions of the Act or its regulations.

*A Guide to the Employment Standards Act* is available from the Employment Standards Branch offices. In the Toronto area, information on certain standards is also available on taped messages over the telephone, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The numbers for this service are listed in the blue pages of your telephone directory.

**Handicapped Employment Program**
Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7
(416) 965-2321
TDD: (416) 965-2817

The goal of the Handicapped Employment Program (HEP) is to increase employment opportunities in the private sector for people with disabilities. HEP works to accomplish this goal by:

- providing consulting services to employers on affirmative action and employment equity
- working in cooperation with communities, employer organizations, consumer groups, service agencies, health and rehabilitation professionals, educators and organized labour to identify barriers and develop solutions
- offering information resources to all the above groups
- providing advice to job-seekers and referring them to placement services and other employment resources available to them in their community

**Independent Learning Centre**
Ministry of Education
909 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 3G2
Toronto: (416) 965-2657
From elsewhere in Ontario, call 1-800-268-7065 (toll-free).

Information is also available from regional offices: see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Centre provides residents of Ontario with elementary and secondary school correspondence courses. The courses are offered free of charge and are available throughout the year. Educational counselling services are available by telephone, correspondence or interview.

**Ministry of Colleges and Universities**
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2
(416) 965-6407

The Ministry is responsible for the development, coordination and administration of policies regarding universities and colleges of applied arts and technology. The Ministry also provides operating and capital grants to these institutions. Publications include *Horizons: A Guide to Post-Secondary Education in Canada*, which is available from high schools, post-secondary institutions or the Ministry's offices in Toronto.

Programs of the Ministry include:

- support services for hearing-impaired students: sign language or oral interpreters, note-takers and/or amplification devices are available free of charge to part-time students enrolled in credit courses at post-secondary institutions
- audio and braille transcription services: transcriptions of textbooks and other resource materials are available free of charge to students with print handicaps taking credit courses at post-secondary institutions
- student awards: the Ministry's student assistance programs provide loans and grants to eligible students attending post-secondary institutions

**Ontario Human Rights Commission**
400 University Avenue
12th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7
Toronto: (416) 965-6841
From elsewhere in Ontario, call 1-800-268-9004 (toll-free).
TDD: (416) 965-6871

Other offices are located across Ontario: see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Commission administers and enforces the Human Rights Code, 1981, which provides for the right to equal treatment in employment, services, goods, facilities, accommodations and contracts without discrimination because of physical or mental handicap, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, marital status, family status, record of offences (employment only) or receipt of public assistance (accommodation only).

The Commission investigates complaints of discrimination and distributes free publications, including:

*Human Rights: Discrimination Because of Handicap*

*Human Rights: Complaint Procedures*

*A Guide to the Human Rights Code, 1981*

*Employment Application Forms and Interviews*

**Publications Service**
Ministry of Government Services
880 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N8
Toronto: (416) 965-6015
From elsewhere in Ontario, call 1-800-268-7540 (toll-free). In area code 807, ask the operator for Zenith 67200.

The Publications Service distributes by mail order all Ontario government publications, including the *KWIC Index to Your Ontario Government Services* and the *Government of Ontario Telephone Directory*. You may also visit the Ontario Government Bookstore at 880 Bay Street, Toronto, or Access Ontario, Rideau Centre Mall, Ottawa.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)**
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

The Ministry has vocational rehabilitation counsellors operating out of area and local offices across Ontario and through a number of volunteer agencies. See the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program is designed to help people with disabilities prepare for and obtain employment. VRS can provide vocational counselling, assessments, training, job placement and assistive devices. It can also provide incentives to employers who hire and train VRS clients.

If you are enrolled in a training program and are receiving services from VRS, you may be eligible to receive financial assistance for living expenses from the Ministry's Income Maintenance Program.

It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with VRS programs before you speak to a counsellor. The booklet *On Your Way to Work* is available at all VRS offices.

**Ontario Women's Directorate**
Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1C2
(416) 965-4801 or 965-7785

The Ontario Women's Directorate coordinates the development and communication of programs and policies for women of the province. Services provided include:

- Consultative Services Branch: offers free consulting service to both public-sector and private-sector employers regarding affirmative action/employment equity programs
- Resource Centre (5th Floor): contains books, articles and bibliographies on subjects relating to women; films are available on loan, free of charge
- information on women's issues and numerous free publications, including:

*Career Selector*

*Job Search*

*New Skills for Women*

*Your Rights as a Worker*

*Ontario Labour Legislation of Interest to Women*

*Pregnancy Leave*

*Women in the Labour Force Fact Sheets*

**Workers' Compensation Board**
2 Bloor Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 3C3
(416) 927-4900 or 927-4335

Regional, area and information offices are located across Ontario; see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Workers' Compensation Board provides services to people who may have been injured at work. Vocational rehabilitation services may include pre-vocational services, evaluation services and job placement and training services. The Board can also provide subsidies for employers who train and employ injured workers. Financial assistance for workplace modification and special devices required by injured workers for employment may also be considered.

**Work Incentive Program (WIN)**
Ministry of Community and Social Services

Area and local offices are located across Ontario: see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

Persons with disabilities who are receiving family benefits allowances and who are entering full-time employment may be eligible for special cash incentives for up to 24 months under the Work Incentive Program. In addition to cash benefits and assistance with back-to-work expenses, recipients unable to continue full-time employment are guaranteed quick reinstatement of family benefits.

**Youth Employment Programs**
Ontario Ministry of Skills Development
700 Bay Street
2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1Z6
Toll-free hotline:
1-800-387-0777
Toll-free TDD:
1-800-387-0743

The Youth Employment Programs serve all unemployed youth, including youth with disabilities (ages 16 to 24 plus early school leavers). More than 45 communities have Ontario Youth Employment Counselling Centres. Call the toll-free hotline for information about employment programs and the Centre nearest you.

## Federal Government

### Finding Information on Federal Programs and Services

The quickest way to find information on federal programs and services is to consult the government blue pages of your telephone directory.

If you can't find the information you need in the blue pages, the Canada Service Bureau operates telephone referral services on federal programs and services that can be reached by calling one of the numbers listed below. A Client Services Officer will answer your question or locate the correct office to handle your inquiry. The Officer can also provide you with TDD and toll-free numbers for the office, if they are available.

Toronto: (416) 973-1993

Ottawa: (613) 995-7151

North Bay: (705) 476-4910

Toll-free from area codes 705 and 807: 1-800-461-1554

Toll-free from other area codes: 1-800-387-4910

**Canadian Government Publishing Centre**
Supply and Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0S9
Inquiries: (819) 997-5362
Telephone orders:
(819) 997-2560

The Centre publishes and sells federal publications, including *Index to Federal Programs and Services* and *Government of Canada Telephone Directory*. Federal publications can also be consulted at most public libraries and are sold through several authorized bookstores. For the address of the nearest bookstore, call the Supply and Services office listed in the blue pages of your telephone directory.

**Canadian Human Rights Commission**
*National Office:*
400-90 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1E1
(613) 995-1151
TDD: (613) 996-5211
Collect calls accepted.

*Regional Offices:*
915-270 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5W3
(613) 996-0026
TDD: (613) 998-5927
Collect calls accepted.

Arthur Meighen Building
623-55 St. Clair Avenue East
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1M2
(416) 973-5527
TDD: (416) 965-6871
Collect calls accepted.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission administers the Canadian Human Rights Act, which promotes equal opportunity and prohibits discrimination on 10 grounds– race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, pardoned conviction and disability (physical and mental)– in federal jurisdiction, including federal government departments and agencies, Crown corporations and a number of industries that do business within the legislative scope of Parliament. They include the chartered banks, private companies that regularly transport goods or people across provincial or national borders, companies handling radioactive materials, interprovincial or international pipelines, and broadcasting companies and telephone companies that do business in more than one province.

The Commission investigates complaints of discrimination based on the 10 grounds described above. It also provides several publications in English and French, in braille and on cassette, free of charge, including:

*Physical Disability*

*Mental Disability*

*Canadian Human Rights Act: A Guide*

*A Guide to Screening and Selection in Employment*

*Prohibited Grounds Chart*

*Canadian Human Rights Act: Office Consolidation*

**Employment and Immigration Canada**
Information on Employment and Immigration's programs and services is available from Canada Employment Centres (CECs) located across Canada. For the office nearest you, consult the blue pages of your telephone directory.

While all programs and services of the Department are equally available to all persons, you may find it beneficial to identify yourself as a person with a disability when you contact

CEC and speak to a Counselling Coordinator (formerly called Special Needs Counsellors), in order to take advantage of special measures established for people with disabilities.

These programs and services may be available at your local CEC:

- job search assistance: counselling, group training and publications
- vocational assessments: personal counselling, aptitude and interest tests. Publications include the *Careers Canada Series* (35 booklets describing different occupations), *Careers Province* (fact sheets listing qualifications required for about 650 occupations in each province) and *Directory of Employers of College and University Graduates in Canada.*
- labour market information: job boards listing local openings and the National Job Bank, a computerized listing of jobs available across Canada
- programs designed specifically to enable disadvantaged people—including those with disabilities—to train for and enter the job market

In addition Employment and Immigration funds various outreach projects intended to find jobs for people with disabilities. These include:

ADEPT (Assistance to the Disabled in Employment and Placement Training) - Toronto
(416) 422-5640

CNIB Outreach - Toronto
(416) 487-2514

Job Placement for the Hearing-Impaired - Toronto
(416) 964-9595
TDD: (416) 964-2066

Line 1000 - Ottawa
(613) 238-8422
TDD: (613) 238-8422

March of Dimes - Sault Ste. Marie
(705) 949-1699

March of Dimes - Timmins
(705) 267-2183

PATH Employment Services - Hamilton
(416) 545-3475
TDD: (416) 545-1448

Project Job Search (Jewish Vocational Services) - Toronto
(416) 787-1151

STEPS (Epilepsy Association) - Toronto
(416) 593-4011

**Public Service Commission of Canada**

*Ottawa/Hull Region:*

**Services to Handicapped Persons**
Vanguard Building
171 Slater Street
2nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M7
(613) 996-9676 or 996-8164
TDD: (613) 996-1205 or 995-1109

**Services to Psychiatrically Disabled Persons**
Vanguard Building
171 Slater Street
2nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M7
(613) 996-8232

*Ontario Region:*

**Services to Handicapped Persons**
180 Dundas Street West
Suite 1100
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2A8
(416) 973-3145
TDD: (416) 973-2269
Toll-free: 1-800-268-8043

The Commission is the staffing arm of the federal government. The offices listed above provide special

recruitment and referral services to assist applicants with disabilities in identifying and securing employment in the federal public service.

**Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat**
Secretary of State
Terrasses de la Chaudière
15 Eddy Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M5
(819) 994-5694
TDD: (819) 997-2415

*Regional Office:*
200-25 St. Clair Avenue East
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1M5
(416) 973-7541

District offices are located across Ontario; see the blue pages of your telephone directory.

The Secretariat has responsibility across the federal government to coordinate policy and related activities and to promote an understanding of the rights and interests of Canadians with disabilities. The Secretariat can answer questions about federal programs and services or refer you to the correct office to handle your inquiries. The Secretariat also provides free publications, including:

*Disabled Persons in Canada* (print only)

*Directory of Federal Services for the Handicapped and Disabled* (print and cassette)

*Obstacles* (print and cassette)

*Surmounting Obstacles* (print and braille)

*World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons* (print and cassette)

## Organizations

For a complete listing of organizations associated with disability in your community, go to your public library or contact your local Community Information Centre.

**Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH)**
40 Orchard View Boulevard
Suite 255
Toronto, Ontario
M4R 1B9
(416) 482-8255
TDD: (416) 482-1254

**Group Served**
persons with physical and mental disabilities

**Services**
- provides test-case litigation and consultation to lawyers involved in actions concerning the rights of people with disabilities
- publishes legal information and has a specialized library that includes braille and taped materials
- provides public legal education

**Alternative Computer Training for the Disabled (ACT)**
250 The Esplanade
Suite 203
Toronto, Ontario
M5A 1J2
(416) 365-3330

**Group Served**
adults with physical disabilities

**Services**
- mainframe computer programmer training and employment placement. Students are paid minimum wage during training.

**The Arthritis Society**
*National, Regional and Toronto Office:*
250 Bloor Street East
Suite 401
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 3P2
(416) 967-1414

Other offices across Ontario. Check your local telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
people with disabling arthritis

**Services**
- referrals to other services and agencies
- occupational therapists can provide information on technical aids for use in the workplace and assess locations to make recommendations on adaptations
- social workers can advise clients on training options and career choices

**Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**
*National Office:*
586 Eglinton Avenue East
Suite 204
Toronto, Ontario
M4P 1P2
(416) 485-9149

Local chapters across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
persons with cystic fibrosis

Services
- employment for youth and young adults is a major concern of the CCFF Quality of Life Committee
- support groups for adults with CF in local chapters
- publications include *Information for Employers*, available free of charge

**Canadian Diabetes Association**
*Ontario Divisional Office:*
232 Central Avenue
London, Ontario
N6A 1M9
(519) 438-7235

Branches and chapters across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

Group Served
persons with diabetes

Services
- self-help groups
- information on job accommodations
- advice regarding employment discrimination
- referrals to other services

**Canadian Hearing Society**
*Ontario Regional Office:*
271 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2V3
(416) 964-9595
TDD: (416) 964-0340

Other offices across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

Group Served
persons with a hearing impairment

Services
- intake and referral to other services and programs
- TDD message relay system
- sign language interpreters; sign language and lip-reading classes
- personal and vocational counselling
- job search advice and assistance
- employment placement and follow-up
- speech therapy and aural rehabilitation
- audiological department; hearing aid program

**Canadian Legal Advocacy Information and Research Association of the Disabled (CLAIR)**
85 Hastey Avenue
Room 315
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5
(613) 230-8515

Group Served
persons with all types of disabilities

Services
- publishes the national journal *Just Cause*, which reports on legal issues of concern to people with disabilities (available in print and cassette)
- conducts legal research and education on issues, with an emphasis on employment and human rights
- is not involved in direct litigation but can provide information, general advice and referral to other legal services

**Canadian National Institute for the Blind**
*Provincial Office:*
1929 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 3E8
(416) 486-2500
TDD: (416) 486-2673

Other offices located across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
persons who are blind or visually impaired

**Services**
- peer group support for job-seekers
- information, demonstration, loan and provision of technical aids
- information on financial incentives for employers
- employment assessments
- career counselling and job search assistance
- job readiness training; limited vocational training
- employment placement and follow-up
- advice regarding employment discrimination
- resource centre and referral service

**Canadian Paraplegic Association**
*Regional Office:*
520 Sutherland Drive
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 3V9
(416) 422-5640

Other offices located across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
persons with spinal-cord injuries or neuro-muscular disease

**Services**
- information on and referral to other programs and services
- guidance in career planning and job-hunting
- employment placement and follow-up
- general supportive counselling

**COSTI-IIAS Immigrant Services**
76 Orfus Road
Toronto, Ontario
M6A 1L9
(416) 789-7925

COSTI-IIAS has three other locations in the Toronto area. Call the number above for more information.

**Group Served**
immigrants from all countries, including workers with disabilities or injuries

**Services**
- general education/vocational counselling
- information and referral
- upgrading classes for apprentices
- training/retraining in skills and trades
- assistance with documentation
- support groups

**The Centre for Advancement in Work and Living (CAWL)**
41-45 Chauncey Avenue
Etobicoke, Ontario
M8Z 2Z2
(416) 231-2295

**Group Served**
young adults with disadvantages or disabilities

**Services**
- information on technical aids and job accommodations
- academic and employment assessments
- psychological and rehabilitation assessments
- career counselling and job search assistance
- job readiness and vocational training (industrial, clerical and computer skills)
- academic upgrading

• employment placement and follow-up

• advice regarding employment discrimination

• resource centre and referral to other services

**Epilepsy Ontario**
*Regional Office:*
5385 Yonge Street
Suite 207
Willowdale, Ontario
M2N 5R7
(416) 229-2291

Other offices and contact personnel across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

Group Served
persons with epilepsy

Services
• peer group support for job-seekers

• vocational/career counselling

• job readiness training

• job search advice and assistance

• information on financial assistance and incentives for employers

• employment placement and follow-up

• advice regarding employment discrimination

• resource centre and referral service

**Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada**
*National, Regional and Toronto Office:*
250 Bloor Street East
Suite 820
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 3P9
(416) 922-6065

Other offices across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

Group Served
persons with MS and related disorders

Services
• general supportive counselling and self-help groups

• information on technical aids and accommodations, and on computer training programs

• advice regarding employment discrimination

• referrals to other programs and services

**Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada**
*Ontario Regional Office:*
357 Bay Street
9th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2T7
(416) 363-2112

Support groups and chapters across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

Group Served
persons with neuro-muscular disorders, including ALS and muscular dystrophy

Services
• provides financial assistance for equipment, mobility devices, repairs and clinic transportation

• Barrier-Free Design Centre provides information to individuals and employers, and can send a consultant to worksites to do assessments and provide drawings of required renovations

**Ontario Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (OACALD)**
1901 Yonge Street
Suite 504
Toronto, Ontario
M4S 2Z3
(416) 487-4107

Chapters across Ontario. Contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
persons with learning disabilities

**Services**
- information on job accommodations
- job search advice and assistance
- referral to other resources
- advice regarding employment discrimination
- resource centre
- resource kit: *Learning-Disabled Adults and Employment* ($2.50)

**Ontario Federation for the Cerebral Palsied**
*Headquarters:*
1020 Lawrence Avenue West
Suite 303
Toronto, Ontario
M6A 1C8
(416) 787-4595

Member groups across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
persons with a cerebral palsy condition and/or other physical disabilities

**Services**
- general supportive counselling
- information on technical aids and accommodations
- information related to housing and support services
- resource centre and referral to other services and programs

**Ontario March of Dimes**
*Main Office:*
60 Overlea Boulevard
Toronto, Ontario
M4H 1B6
(416) 425-0501

Other offices across Ontario. Check your telephone directory or contact the office above for locations.

**Group Served**
adults with physical disabilities

**Services**
- supplies technical devices, including the latest electronic devices and microcomputers
- provides barrier-free design consultation to employers
- operates 11 vocational rehabilitation centres across Ontario, which provide vocational assessment, rehabilitation, employment counselling and placement
- works with consumer groups on issues such as transportation, housing, accessibility and employment
- provides holiday camps for adults with severe disabilities

**The Pathfinder Program**
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
230 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario
M4V 1R5
(416) 925-5977, ext. 44

Office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday to Friday.

**Group Served**
all job-seekers, including those with disabilities (for example, psychiatric, physical, learning)

**Services**
- an intensive job search program for those prepared to make looking for a job a full-time occupation
- referral to other services

## Self-Help Groups

A self-help group is generally defined as a group of people with similar concerns and difficulties who come together to share their experiences, provide mutual support and exchange practical advice and information. The structure of self-help groups is usually informal, flexible and democratic.

This section provides a few examples of self-help groups; there are several hundred operating in Ontario. While some self-help groups have a permanent location, others do not and are therefore not listed in the telephone directory. Your local Community Information Centre can help you locate groups in your area. A more complete listing is also available in a booklet entitled *Self-Help Groups in Ontario*. The booklet costs $5.00 and is available from:

Canadian Mental Health Association
Ontario Division
56 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S3

**BOOST**
**(Blind Organizations of Ontario with Self-Help Tactics)**
*Head Office:*
597 Parliament Street
Suite B3
Toronto, Ontario
M4X 1W3
(416) 964-6838

42 James Street North
Suite 309
Hamilton, Ontario
L8R 2K2
(416) 522-9482
Elsewhere in Ontario, call
1-800-268-7541 (toll-free).

**Group Served**
persons who are blind or visually impaired

**Services:**
- information on technical aids and job accommodations
- career counselling and job search assistance
- resource centre and referral to other services
- advice regarding employment discrimination and government benefits

**Centre for Independent Living Toronto**
170 Bloor Street West
Suite 304
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1T9
(416) 963-9435

**Group Served**
persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hearing-impaired or physically disabled

**Services**
- works with other community organizations to ensure that the concerns and issues of people with disabilities are being addressed
- provides a Resource Information Centre and referral service to other programs and services
- operates a registry of accessible housing
- provides peer networking of people with disabilities

**Disabled Persons Working Together**
72 Howard Park Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M6R 1V6
(416) 530-0537
TDD: as above

**Group Served**
persons with all types of disabilities

**Services**
- educational seminars
- personal growth and life skills courses
- peer counselling
- information and referral to other services
- outreach to people in chronic care institutions
- projects to spread awareness of disability concerns
- publishes a newspaper, the *Central Courier*

Disabled Persons Working Together is part of Persons United for Self-Help in Ontario (PUSH Ontario).

**Dis-Abled Women's Network (DAWN) - Toronto**
*Regional Contact:*
Pat Israel
122 Galt Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4M 2Z3
(416) 694-8888

**Group Served**
women with disabilities

**Services**
- peer group support to encourage women with disabilities to explore their full potential and full range of career options
- advocacy on the concerns of women with disabilities in all areas, including employment
- referrals to other services and programs

**Handicapped Action Group Inc.**
150 Castlegreen Drive
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7A 7T3
(807) 767-6277
Collect calls accepted.

Group Served
primarily persons with physical disabilities

Services
- peer group support for job-seekers
- technical aid information, demonstration, loan and provision
- resource centre and referral service to other services and programs
- advice regarding employment discrimination
- operates local Handi-transit system

**Independent Living Centre**
235 King Street East
Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 4N5
(519) 576-6300

Group Served
primarily persons with mobility impairments, but interested in all types of disabilities

Services
- provides employment and related information through an informal network of persons with disabilities, resource people and representatives of social and health care services

**Low Vision Association**
145 Adelaide Street West
4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 3H4
(416) 868-1001

Group Served
persons with low vision

Services
- information and demonstration of technical aids
- job search advice/assistance
- employment placement
- peer group support for job-seekers
- information and referral to other services
- publications, including *Eye Trumpets: Getting the Maximum Benefit from Your Limited Vision* (also available in French)

**North Bay and Area Centre for the Disabled**
409 Main Street
P.O. Box 137
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 8G8
(705) 474-3851

Group Served
people with all types of disabilities

Services
- technical aid information, demonstration and loans
- information on financial assistance and incentives for employers
- academic/employment assessment
- vocational/career counselling
- job search advice and assistance
- vocational training in office, clerical and computer skills
- employment placement and follow-up
- advocacy on concerns of persons with disabilities, especially employment
- resource centre and referral service

**On Our Own: Ontario Patients' Self-Help Association**
1860A Queen Street East
Box 7251, Station A
Toronto, Ontario
M5W 1X9
(416) 699-3192

Group Served
present or former psychiatric patients

**Services**

- support group working to promote self-esteem and independent living, leading to employment
- can provide work experience on a limited basis in the Mad Market, a store owned and operated by On Our Own
- "drop-in" service
- a quarterly publication, *Phoenix Rising*

**PUSH Ontario**
**(Persons United for Self-Help in Ontario)**

*Provincial Office:*
597 Parliament Street
Suite 204
Toronto, Ontario
M4X 1W3
(416) 923-6725
TDD: 923-6210

Contact people available in regional offices throughout Ontario; provincial office can provide addresses and telephone numbers.

**Group Served**
people with all types of disabilities

**Services**
PUSH is a non-profit organization that brings together groups and individuals with all types of disabilities to work on issues of common concern. Programs and services in each region vary according to local needs.